Second Meeting of the Second Session of the Thirteenth Assembly

ANGUILLA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

14 APRIL 2026

(House Meetings)

Hon. Speaker

Speaker

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PRAYERS

OPENING AND PRAYER

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Good morning, honourable Members. I apologize for the absence of the Chaplain who has an emergency, and I invite our standing chaplain to open us in a word of prayer, please.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Amen and Amen. Thank you, officer, and we do indeed thank God for the rain. Let's have a seat.

OPENING PRAYER

Clerk:

Thank you so much, Father. We give you praise today. For this is a wonderful day that you've allowed us to see in the land of the living. We thank you for the rain. We thank you Lord for these members that you have brought here, for your word decrees that you will allow one government to take over and no one takes over without you being at the helm.

I ask that you enable their minds, Father God, that they will work on laws that will be beneficial to this country and in return to your people that your perfect will be done. Bless this proceeding today. Bless each and every member of this honourable House in Jesus name, Amen.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES - 19TH MEETING, FIRST SESSION

Clerk:

Confirmation of minutes. Minutes of proceedings of the 19th meeting of the first session of the 13th House of Assembly.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Members, you have before you the minutes of the 19th meeting of the first session dated 4th March 2026. If there are any amendments or corrections, please indicate so now. Hearing no amendments, may I have a mover to approve the minutes as circulated?

Hon.Jose Vanterpool:

Madam Speaker, I move that the minute be confirmed as circulated.

Hon.Cardigan Connor:

I rise to second.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Thank you Honourable Member. It has been moved and seconded that the minutes circulated dated 4th March be confirmed. Those in favour say aye. Those opposed say no. The ayes have it.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES - 1ST MEETING, SECOND SESSION

Clerk:

Minutes of proceedings of the first meeting of the second session of the 13th Anguilla House of Assembly.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Honourable Members, you have before you the minutes of the first meeting of the Second session of the 13th Anguilla House of Assembly dated 7th April 2026. Are there any amendments? Hearing no amendments. Do I have a mover to

confirm these minutes?

Hon.Jose Vanterpool:

Madam Speaker I rise to move that the minutes be confirmed.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Madam Speaker, I rise to second.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

It has been moved and seconded that the minutes dated 7th April be hereby confirmed. Those in favour say aye. Those opposed say no. The ayes have it.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE - ACTING DEPUTY GOVERNOR

Clerk:

Oath of allegiance to new members, the Honourable Deputy Governor acting.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

I call upon the honourable Member to take the oath.

Hon Deputy Governor:

I, Marissa Harden-Hodge, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Charles the Third, his heirs and successors according to the law.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Thank you, Honourable Acting Deputy Governor Harden-Hodge.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Clerk:

Announcements by the direction of the speaker.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER AND STATEMENT ON APRIL 7TH PROCEEDINGS

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

By way of announcements, I have apologies for the Attorney General who is absent today, I have apologies for the absence of the Single Island Electoral District Member Rogers, and I have apologies for the absence of the chaplain who has a family emergency. As you're aware, today is the official commencement of the second session of the 13th Anguilla House of Assembly. I do wish to, however, place on record a statement as it relates to our first meeting, on the 7th of April.

Honourable Members, the Chair places on record this statement concerning 2 matters arising from the proceedings of April 7th, 2026. An excerpt of the transcript of those proceedings will be attached to this statement and form part of the Minutes. The question before the House on April 7th was the Customs Temporary Modification of Valuation of Import Duty Act 2026. The Rules of Procedure had been suspended under the standing orders to permit all three readings at the same time.

The bill was uncontested. And the Member, the honourable Member for Road South, confirmed at the outset that the opposition would be voting in favour of it. The members spoke for in excess of 30 minutes. As documented in the attached transcript to the minutes. The content of the contribution included the following subjects, none of which the Chair determined constituted any substantive contribution to the bill. The contents of the presentation as enumerated one. The development and operation of the COVID-19 travel bubble. Two, Geopolitical events in the Middle East, the United States military engagement with Iran, the 1974 Petro Dollar Agreement and the diversification of the Gulf Economies.

Three, the transformation of Dubai as a tourism destination. Four, Saudi Arabia’s investment in tourism and the lifting of its prohibition on alcohol. Five, projections for the growth of Anguilla’s tourism numbers. Six, Dot AI revenue history and projections to 1 billion EC dollars by 2030. Seven, the collapse of the National Bank of Anguilla, the creation of Asidco and the purchase of the Cinnamon Reef property. Eight, the Anguilla Fiscal Recovery Plan 2009 to 2011 and correspondence from the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office. Nine, electricity credits, Senior shield, Junior shield and Pre-primary school teachers pay. Ten, the effect of GST on business operating costs with reference to named operators.

Eleven, the Anglec Board of Directors under successive administrations. Twelve, a personal observation regarding the Caracasbai building while traveling to purchase water from a named local brand and thirteen, the member's own personal borrowing history with National Bank of Anguilla and fishing arrangements with Saint Martin referenced during the 2005 Western election campaign. The following breaches are hereby noted for the record. Rule 62.

One Relevance: none of the subjects above bear a direct or necessary relationship to the Bill that was before the House. A general political argument as to fiscal capacity does not render irrelevant content relevant to a specific and narrow piece of legislation. Rule 62. Two, tedious repetition: The Member returned repeatedly to the same proposition that the Government had fiscal space to do more without advancing it with new substantive material referable to the Bill.

Rule 56, subsection 4, Confinement to subject: The contribution was not confined to the subject under discussion. Rule 56, five, subsection E, Obstruction of business: When invited to indicate how much time was needed to conclude, the Member stated he required a further 2 hours and 15 minutes and that it did not matter how much time he needed. On an uncontested bill. After 30 minutes without a substantive contribution, the Chair was satisfied that the right of speech was being used to obstruct the business of the Assembly.

Rule 66, Responsibility for order: The Speaker, acting on the Speaker's own motion to preserve order and enforce the rules accordingly. The Chair further records that the Member's statement that the Chair's actions were illegal constitutes conduct engaging Rule 72. However, at this stage, the Chair exercises restraint and will not invoke Rule 72.

Following the Chair's intervention, all Members of the opposition withdrew from the Chamber collectively, without notice, without explanation and without the consent of the Speaker in direct breach of Rule 10 subsection 2, which provides no member shall leave the Assembly or a committee of the Assembly except with the consent of the Speaker or the Chair of the committee. No consent was sought and none was granted. The withdrawal was collective, deliberate and timed immediately following a lawful ruling of the Chair. The Chair does not at this time move to further any proceedings in respect of this.

However, every member as we are commencing the second session should be aware that the rules are very clear and they will be enforced. If a party or parties or Members wish to withdraw from the chambers, there is a procedure to do so. The Chair will never restrain anybody from leaving, but the proper procedure is to rise to your feet and indicate that you wish consent to leave the chambers. And I make that clear because it happened just before the bill was voted on and I had anticipated that the members were returning. I wasn't aware that the members weren't returning. All interventions by the Chair made on April 7th, 2026, were made in accordance with the Standing Orders of this House and were directed solely at the procedural obligations that bind every Member equally.

This statement shall appear in the minutes of the proceedings of April 14th, 2026, under the Announcements by direction of the Speaker. Thank you, honourable Members.

QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS AND GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS - NONE

Clerk:

Questions, none. Government statements and recent developments, none.

GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS

GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS AND PAPERS - NONE

Clerk:

Government statements on recent developments, none. Papers, none.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES - NONE

Clerk:

Reports from committees, none.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND PETITIONS - NONE

Clerk:

Reports from committees, none. Petitions, none.

PETITIONS

PETITIONS - NONE

Clerk:

Petitions,none.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE MEMBERS NOTICES - NONE

Clerk:

Government notices, none. Private members notices, none.

MOTIONS

MOTION 3 OF 2026 - CUSTOMS EXEMPTION OF DUTY ON GASOLINE AND DIESEL IMPORTS REGULATIONS 2026

Clerk:

Motions. Motion 3 of 2026 2/13 HOA Approval of Customs, Exemption of duty on Gasoline and Diesel Imports. Regulations 2026.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

I call upon the mover for the Motion 3 of 2026.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Good morning to you, Madam Speaker. Good morning to Members of this honourable House and to the listening and viewing public. Madam Speaker, I beg to move the following motion. Customs Exemption of duty on Gasoline and Diesel Imports. Regulations, 2026. Yes, thank you. Madam Speaker, if I may be permitted to read the resolution.

Thank you. Whereas, section 76 of the Customs Act, RSA chapter 169 enables the Governing council to make regulations in relation to tariff rates. Whereas the Governing Council did make those regulations on 8th April 2026. WHEREAS section 76 of the Customs Act provides that the regulations may not take effect until it is approved by resolution of the House of Assembly.

And whereas those regulations are set out in the scheduled hereto be it resolved that under section 76 of the Customs Act, Chapter 169, the House of Assembly approves the regulations set out in the Schedule and at the Schedule. Madam Speaker, it speaks at the exemptions from duty, paragraph one. The items specified in the Schedule are exempt from the imposition of duty, the citation and commencement section. These regulations will be cited as the Customs Exemption of Duty on Gasoline and Diesel Imports Regulations, 2026. And subsection 2, these regulations are deemed to have come into force on the 18th of March, 2026, the expiry date. These regulations expire on 18th June 2026.

And attaches the schedule. Madam Speaker, items temporarily exempted from the imposition of duty. The following items are temporarily exempt from the imposition of duty: gasoline, motor spirit and the Tariff Code is set out as well as diesel oil and the Tariff Code is settled. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Is there a seconder?

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Madam Speaker, I rise to second.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Yes, thank you. Madam Speaker, if I may be permitted to read the resolution.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Proceed Member.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Thank you, honourable Member. Does any other Member wish to contribute to the regulations that are before this floor? The Chair recognizes the honorable Single Island Wide Electoral District Member Hodge.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Madam Speaker, good morning to the House and the people of Anguilla. I rise in full support of this motion being brought to the House by the Honorable Premier, Member for Sandy Hill District, to approve the customs exemptions, the exemption of duty on gasoline and diesel imports. Madam Speaker, we all are aware of what's happening globally in Iran, in the Strait of Hormuz as it relates to the shipment of oil and the blockades that are now taking place.

That continues to bring a level of instability throughout the world as it relates to fuel costs. We would have seen recently we would have passed two other measures to control the cost increases that are happening globally. And these are all measures to cushion the impact that the rising cost per barrel of oil is having on gasoline, fuel and diesel. So,

Madam Speaker, this measure, what we are doing today is removing the duty on gasoline and diesel. So essentially, at the point of importation at the port, there will be no taxes collected by government. Government is trying its best to keep the cost per imperial gallon down as much as possible.

MOTION ON FUEL TAX SUSPENSION AND GASOLINE PRICES

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Down as much as possible. So in essence, Madam Speaker, the general public should note that all the taxes that government would have been receiving prior to March 18th, because we have a retroactive date for this to begin, it started, but we are coming to the House to make it enforceable retroactively.

The general public, importers need to know that government will not be collecting taxes on gasoline at this point in time. And this, Madam Speaker, is all, in effect, to help maintain and

control the costs that people will have to pay. Does this mean, Madam Speaker, that the cost at the pump will not increase?

It doesn't. What it means is that from government standpoint, we are not collecting any taxes whatsoever. So this, Madam Speaker, is part of the response measures in the interim that we have been able to do. Now there still is a maximum price order that is placed on gasoline. In that max price, Madam Speaker, regulates the amount of profit that fuel companies, the likes of Delta and

Sol and Anguilla Gases, can make. And I stated yesterday in my press conference, Madam Speaker, and I believe that it is worth repeating again today. I would have quoted the max prices that exist currently. At Delta stations, the max price is $15.49 per imperial gallon. And this price may not fully reflect current costs due to a lack of invoices provided, but nevertheless, this is the current price per imperial gallon at Delta stations.

At Sol stations, the max price is $18.15 per imperial gallon. This price would be at $20.15 if duty and custom service fee was included. So this is a clear example, Madam Speaker, of the reduction that now exists at the pump based on government removing the import duty being charged at the port.

At Anguilla Gases, it is $15.74 per imperial gallon. This price would otherwise be $17.68 with duty and service fee. So, Madam Speaker, as we speak and as we bring this motion into effect, things are changing. The landscape is changing on a daily basis as it relates to the cost per barrel of oil. And it is expected, Madam Speaker, that later this week, the prices at the pump may change because it is subject to the importation costs that private bulk suppliers purchase at.

So we continue, Madam Speaker, to monitor the space. And if I can just give some more context as it relates to the effects of this war on the cost of gasoline importation. Yesterday, I would have stated, and this is information that came directly from the Department of Consumer Affairs, and I want to thank the director, Mr. Francisco, for his work that he has been doing in keeping up to date with what's happening locally, regionally and globally.

The landed cost per gallon of gasoline, Madam Speaker, has gone from $7.72 EC. I repeat, the landed costs of gasoline has gone from $7.72 EC in January to $17.49 EC in March. That is a landed cost that is an increase of 126%. In terms of that cost per gallon for these importers bringing in fuel to Anguilla, and that is significant, Madam Speaker, it is alarming.

It is troublesome. It is something, Madam Speaker, that the entire population, all of us, Madam Speaker, have to be concerned about. And we have to look at our patterns. Because at a cost of $7.72 in January, that is almost next to nothing compared to what it is now, $17.49 in March.

What this should really say to us as a consuming public, Madam Speaker, is that our habits should change. We should be cognizant of this increase, Madam Speaker, and change our behavior. So as much as possible, Madam Speaker, I am appealing for everyone, including myself, to try as best as possible to drive less, maybe we should carpool.

I didn't move my vehicle from the office to come here to the House. I walked. And if I need to go down to Lands and Surveys right now, I shouldn't jump in my vehicle to go down there, I should save that quart of gas. And I should walk.

And if I need to go down to NCBA to do a deposit, Madam Speaker, I should walk. Because that is, in essence, keeping money in my pocket and at the same time I'm getting my steps in. So, Madam Speaker, you know we can't walk everywhere. And of course, today's a rainy day. Right. We can't walk everywhere, but I'm appealing to the public, I'm appealing to the people of Anguilla to be mindful because this $17.49 can change.

It can go upward. So I appeal to the public and to ourselves, everybody in this House, to be responsible as much as possible. So, Madam Speaker, I support this motion fully. And I thank you for the time that you have granted me to be able to speak to it. Thanks.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Thank you, Honourable Member. Are there any other contributions? I recognize the Honourable Member for Island Harbour.

Hon.Ellis Lorenzo Webster:

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and good morning to you. Madam Speaker, good morning to the Members of the House, the staff, those in the gallery, to Anguillians here and abroad. As speaker, I rise in support of this motion. I'd like to say that the motion for three months is not enough. Madam Speaker, I state that because we do know that, as the Member said, this is retroactive to the 18th of March.

Coincidentally, that was my birthday, so it will go down and end for me. But we do know, as the Member said, that from last year to January, or from January to March, there's been 126% increase in the landed cost of fuel. And we can just imagine that as the war in Iran continues and his blockades in the Straits of Hormuz, that this is an unpredictable cost and more than likely will just continue to escalate. And back in April of 2022, the Anguilla Progressive Movement removed the excise tax from gasoline. That was until December of 22, Madam Speaker, and then was extended, and so we would like to see the government being more proactive and extending the length of this,

Madam Speaker. The bulk fuel levy is another cost that could have been removed from the provided cost of gasoline and diesel. The bulk fuel levy was put on at $750,000 per bulk fuel provider, Madam Speaker, and this came from the MTEF of 2016, and we do know which administration was in at that time, the Anguilla United Front, and this was put in the MTEF as a means of revenue.

But it was not implemented, Madam Speaker. It was not put in place until the Anguilla Progressive Movement came in and was scrounging to find means of revenue for Anguilla to survive. Madam Speaker, we were dependent on the $100 million, the MOU, which provided that as relief for COVID. Madam Speaker, there was proposed that the bulk fuel levy would be dropped to have 200,000 per bulk fuel provider and with that also,

Madam Speaker, I don't know if the Honourable Leader of Government business will speak to this in the opening address and the legislative agenda because, unlike previous years, this House has not received the legislative agenda. At least the Members on this side have not received a copy of the legislative agenda which is usually provided, even if it was within 24 hours of the presentation, Madam Speaker, and I find that troublesome,

Madam Speaker. Maybe that is a reflection that we had a legislative agenda presented in the first year, 43 different legislative items and only two of those made it to this Honourable House. Maybe we're not supposed to know what's coming, but I wait, Madam Speaker. So, Madam Speaker, I'm saying that if the bulk fuel levy had been put in place and reduced like it was intended to, and we're also attached to that would have been fishermen or fisherpersons and would have received a reduction on the cost of fuel, gasoline, diesel for going out and providing for our people and for our businesses, our restaurants and our hotels.

Maybe that would have been another further reduction in the cost of fuel that would have been reflected from over a year ago and certainly that jump now from 15 to 18 or from 18 to 20, which is anticipated, would not have happened as rapidly as we see happening. And so, as I said, I commend the government for this step to remove the duties completely, we had removed the excise duty, now the duty, customs duties removed.

That is a good step. Madam Speaker, I stand again to say that this is not for a long enough period. The dot AI is bringing in enough revenue that we could have extended it, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, we do know again, with the dot AI that the predictability of it is more sure because in 2018, the administration at that time had put in the MTEF that they would move the dot AI domain name registration, marketing and management from the person who was handling it to market it to have someone from the outside do it.

That happened in 2025 under the APM administration and now the administration currently can boast that we've gone from making $1,000,000 EC in 2020 to now making, budgeting for 231 million for 2026, and we think that will be exceeded because the government has announced that they're bringing in about $30 million a month. So, Madam Speaker, I'm saying with that type of, and I don't want to say exceeding the expected amount because we don't know what can happen, but currently as it is, I think the people of Anguilla, the businesses of Anguilla, the fishermen, the farmers would feel more confident in their projections if they knew that this was extended for a longer period of time initially and then to look at it probably down after the summer when you know because we know that between the months of May through September, October is the lean time in Anguilla.

Revenues and salaries for, especially for hospitality workers, will be reduced. And so, I'm pleading to the government to take this motion back and to have it reviewed urgently for an extension and to consider the bulk fuel levy legislation so that further reductions in the cost of fuel can be instituted.

I thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Thank you, Honourable Leader of Opposition. Are there any other contributions?

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Does the Honourable mover wish to reply?

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I endorse the comments made by the Honourable Single Island Wide Member, Honourable Kyle Hodge, in terms of urging persons to look at the fuel spending patterns, the fuel usage and adjust accordingly. And Madam Speaker, this matter reminds me that this is not a situation similar to the days of COVID.

And during the time of the previous Anguilla United Front administration, between 2015 and 2020, the borders were closed and as a result, persons who were in Anguilla for all intents and purposes were positively protected from the effects of COVID while the whole world was experiencing the negative effects in terms of the large number of deaths, etcetera.

And so, while the country was closed, persons in our country operated as if no COVID existed and we were not wearing masks, we were hugging and moving around freely. We were having parties, we were having staycations and so, for what was being impacted in the outer world, we, for all intents and purposes, were guarded, protected against that impact here in Anguilla.

But this is not that case, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the cost of fuel will impact all of our lives. This has already done so. It has already impacted the government in terms of the expenditure that is required to protect the people of Anguilla for this two, three month period. It also means that at some point, if this situation continues and is likely to continue for some time, then it means that we all have to guard against ensuring that we do not utilize or spend or waste the fuel usage, the fuel supply that we have on land. And so, I encourage persons to take a look at the usage patterns, take a look at the extent of time that you are burning.

MOTION 3 OF 2026 - CUSTOMS DUTY EXEMPTION AND LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM MOTION

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Honourable Members, it has been moved and seconded that Motion 3 of 2026, two of the 13th House of Assembly, Approval of Customs, Exemption of Duty on Gasoline and Diesel Inputs Regulations, 2026 becomes a resolution of this Assembly. Those in favor say aye, those opposed say no. The ayes have it. The motion is carried.

Members, today is the formal opening of the second session and pursuant to Standing Order 13, today is the day the Premier moves the non-substantive motion relating to the government's legislative program in accordance with Rule 13(2). The Premier's speech in support of the motion is referenced in Rule 13(1) and the Leader of Opposition will have an opportunity to reply at the subsequent sitting. The House will rise for 10 minutes to permit the copies to be presented for the motion to proceed thereafter. We will rise for 10 minutes.

MOTION 4 OF 2026 - GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Clerk:

Motion 4 of 2026 2/13 HOA for the consideration of Government's legislative program for the second session of the 13th Anguilla House of Assembly.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

I call upon the Honourable Premier to move a motion. Motion #4 of 2026.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I wish to move motion #4 2026/2.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Of 13 HOA.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Thank you, honourable Member, is there a seconder?

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Madam Speaker, I rise to second.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

It has been moved and seconded. The honourable mover is called upon to give the address.

MOTION 4 OF 2026 - GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM AND GST REFORM

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise today with humility and with purpose and with a deep sense of responsibility to the people of Anguilla. We gather at the opening of a new session of this honourable House at a time when the world around us remains unsettled, when uncertainty abroad continues to shape realities at home, and when the burdens carried by ordinary people are real, immediate and deeply felt. Across the communities, families continue to feel the pressure of rising crises. Small businesses continue to work through higher operating costs. Working people continue to make difficult decisions every day about how to stretch incomes, support children, care for relatives and hold together households in a time when the cost of daily living has become heavier than it ought to be.

These are not abstract matters. They are not statistics alone. They are the lived experience of our people. In recent months, those pressures have been sharpened by wider global developments, rising fuel prices, volatility in energy markets, higher freight and shipping costs, and the geopolitical instability that, though far from our shores, arrives here nonetheless in the form of higher bills, tighter margins and greater strain on the people we serve.

Madam Speaker, in times such as these, government cannot afford to be detached, it cannot afford to be performative and it cannot afford to mistake activity for action. It must be serious, it must be steady, it must be compassionate and it must be prepared to act in a way that is disciplined, thoughtful and anchored always in the national interest. That has been the approach of this government. Madam Speaker, the past year has in many respects been a year of grounding, a year of listening carefully, taking stock, understanding more deeply both the condition of the island and the expectations of the people.

It has been a year in which this government has sought not simply to move, but to move wisely, not to legislate for the sake of numbers, but to govern with intention, not to rush into every matter in search of appearance, but to ensure that the actions taken are sound, sustainable and properly aligned with the needs of Anguilla. That matters, Madam Speaker, because there are moments in national life when the true test of leadership is not how loudly one speaks, but how carefully one listens.

There are moments when good governance requires not haste but judgment, not motion for its own sake, but the discipline to determine what must be done first, what must be done well, and what must be done in a way that can endure. This government has approached its mandate in that spirit. We have taken the time to listen to the concerns of families. We have taken the time to understand the pressures on businesses.

We have taken the time to assess systems, institutions and frameworks that require reform. In doing so, we have been finding our footing, not in uncertainty, but in intention, not in hesitation but in clarity. Because, Madam Speaker, it is one thing to inherit responsibility. It is another thing to shape it into an agenda that is coherent, compassionate and fit for the times. That has been the work of the past year. If the first phase of this administration has been about grounding itself in the realities of the island, then the next phase must be about building from that foundation with greater confidence, greater structure, and greater purpose. Among the most significant actions of the first session of this honourable House was the reform of the Goods and Services Tax.

That reform must be understood for what it was. It was not merely a technical tax measure, not merely an exercise in fiscal redesign, but one of the major early acts of a government seeking to place people first at the center of public policy. This was a campaign commitment, a promise made to the people of Anguilla and it was delivered within the first six months of taking office, taking effect on the 1st of August 2025. That timing matters because it demonstrated that this government was prepared not only to speak about fairness, but to act on it.

It demonstrated that when we said the cost of living mattered, we meant it. It demonstrated that when we said the tax structure should not add unnecessarily to the burden borne by households and businesses, we were prepared to make the changes required. It demonstrated that compassion and fiscal responsibility are not opposing values, but partners in responsible governance. Before that reform, the structure of the Goods and Services Tax placed the burden too directly and too heavily on the final consumer in ways that affected the everyday experience of households and enterprises across this island.

Under the new approach, the tax was restructured, the Goods and Services Tax was transformed into a General Services tax applying to services, while a separate goods tax was introduced at the border. In practical terms, GST was removed from goods entirely. It means that the point of sale burden was eased. It means that the structure of taxation on consumption was altered in a way intended to give breathing room to households and businesses.

It means that the system was made clearer and more responsive to the pressures actually facing people.

MOTION TO ADJOURN FOR REPLY TO OPENING ADDRESS

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Honourable Member, thank you for your address. I invite you now to move a motion in respect of Standing Order 13(3) in respect to the reply.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Thank you, Madam Speaker, I beg to move in accordance with Standing Order Section 13 that the House of Assembly stands adjourned until the extraordinary sitting of the House, which is on the 28th of April 2026. The debate, Yes, thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Is there a seconder? That this House stands adjourned so that the Leader of the Opposition may reply to the opening address at the next ordinary sitting and the debate of the motion. Is there a seconder?

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Madam Speaker, I raise a second.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Thank you. It has been moved and seconded that the matter pertaining to motion 4/2026 stands adjourned for debate to the next ordinary sitting. Those in favor say aye, those opposed say no. The ayes have it. We shall now proceed with the Order Paper.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Clerk:

Personal explanations, none.

OTHER BUSINESS

TRANSITION TO GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Clerk:

Government.

PROCEDURAL PAUSE

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Honourable Members, let's stand up for a few minutes, please. I need to talk to the Sergeant of Arms.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

This house resumes its sitting. I'll call upon the clerk to proceed with the order paper.

FUEL USAGE AND CONSERVATION

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

It also means that if this situation continues for some time, we must guard against wasting the fuel supply we have on land. I encourage everyone to review their usage patterns and consider how long they are burning electricity, especially air conditioners, and try to adjust those patterns.

FUEL DUTY EXEMPTION AND PRICE INCREASES

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Have your electricity on only as needed, especially with air conditioners, and try to adjust those usage patterns. The Single Island Wide Member, Honourable Kyle Hodge, confirmed that while this bill ensures the government does not charge duties on imported gasoline or diesel oil, it does not guard against price increases that may come to the island. We will see those increases as the cost of purchase rises, and those prices are likely to be passed on. The government is doing what we can to minimize or eliminate this in the interim.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

But we won't be able to do so for an extended period. That's why I'm asking the people of Anguilla to pay attention to their usage patterns and start changing their behavior. The work the government is doing now will be reviewed in 2-3 months, but we cannot guarantee that it can be continued for an extended period.

BULK FUEL LEVY AND LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Just to respond to the Member for Island Harbour, I take on board the comments made. It's proof that governments are continuous. The Member mentioned the bulk fuel levy and acknowledged it was increased to $750,000 under his administration.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

The member cites a 2016 MTEF report recommending an increase, but the previous administration refrained from doing so until legislation could be put in place to guard against passing that cost on. As you increase the cost of a license, such as the bulk fuel levy, that cost will be passed on unless guardrails are implemented. That was not done under the previous APM administration. The APM brought legislation to increase it to $750,000, then in December, just before the 2025 elections, announced a decrease to bring it back to $200,000.

BULK FUEL LEVY AND DOT AI DOMAIN NAME

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

They did not bring the legislation at that time, so this administration is charged with the responsibility of passing that legislation and bringing it back to the House. The legislation is being discussed and drafted. We're waiting for information to provide the necessary guardrails. The Member from Island Harbour also mentioned the dot AI domain name and stated that the previous AUF had said they would move it to an external source.

DOT AI DOMAIN NAME AND REVENUE

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

At the end of the day, we are where we are in terms of ChatGPT and other platforms. Their existence has created revenue and driven the use of the dot AI domain name.

UPCOMING LEGISLATION AND PROCESS

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

As the Member indicated, it started under the AUF and the APM continued it. Governments are continuous. The legislation to come today was delayed in receiving the final version from the Attorney General's Chambers due to adjustments over the weekend. I extend my apologies to the House, the Clerk, and the Opposition for the delay.

Despite the delay, I am happy that today, when I present my opening address, the Member for Island Harbour does not need to respond as Leader of the Opposition. He will have two weeks to review the legislation and respond at the next sitting.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

This house resumes its sitting. Please take your seats.

GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY AGENDA FOR ECONOMIC RELIEF, RESILIENCE, AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

It means that the point of sale burden was eased. It means that the structure of taxation on consumption was altered in a way intended to give breathing room to households and businesses. It means that the system was made clearer and more responsive to the pressures actually facing people. And that, Madam Speaker, is what a people first government looks like.

It recognizes that public policy is not an abstract exercise. It reaches into homes. It reaches into businesses. It reaches into the daily life of the nation. And where the structure of the system is adding unnecessarily to hardship. A compassionate government does not simply explain the burden. It works. To ease it.

That reform did not come without cost. And we have never pretended otherwise. Real relief has a fiscal cost. A more compassionate tax structure comes with revenue implications. But this government made a deliberate choice that the cost of doing nothing would have been paid by the people of Anguilla, and that was not a choice we were prepared to make. And so, we acted.

And in acting we affirmed something important, that fiscal strength is not an end in itself. It is meaningful only if it can be used wisely to improve the lives of the people from whom government derives both its authority and its purpose. Madam Speaker. This government did not stop there. Even as we implemented structural reform through GST changes, the world shifted again. In recent weeks, developments in the Middle East have created renewed volatility in fuel and energy markets, have increased pressure on shipping and import costs. For a small, highly import dependent economy such as ours, these are not remote developments.

They have direct consequences. They threaten to magnify the cost of daily living. Deepen operational pressures on businesses and widen the strain already felt by households. And so, Madam Speaker, this government has acted once more. Indeed, this House has been convened at the commencement of this second session earlier than might otherwise have been expected, precisely because urgent legislative and policy action was required in response to these evolving circumstances. We did not wait, we did not delay, and we did not pretend that global shocks could be wished away. Instead, we responded with targeted time bound practical measures. We introduced the Customs Temporary Modification of Valuation of Import Duty Act 2026, temporarily adjusting the basis on which ad valorem import duty is calculated so that unusual increases in freight and shipping costs do not continue to enlarge the taxable base and in turn, the burden carried by consumers and businesses.

We advanced the temporary suspension of import duty and the Customs Service fee on gasoline and diesel. Recognizing that fuel costs ripple throughout the economy and that relief at the fuel pump is also relief in transportation, logistics and everyday household spending. Furthermore, we intervened to cushion the increase in the electricity fuel surcharge, ensuring that the impact of global fuel volatility was not simply passed through in full to homes and enterprises across Anguilla.

Madam Speaker. These are not casual measures, they are not gestures, they are meaningful interventions and they come at real fiscal cost. But they reflect the core philosophy of this government that when external shocks threaten to weigh unfairly on the people, the state has a duty to consider what burden it can justly absorb, what pressures it can reasonably cushion, and what steps it can take to steady the lives of those it serves. That is the work of a compassionate government. But let it also be said.

Compassion does not mean recklessness. These measures have been designed to be temporary. Targeted and proportionate. They are responses to unusual conditions, not abandonments of fiscal discipline. They are stabilization tools, not substitutes for sound management. Because responsible government must do two things at once. It must protect people in the present, and it must protect the island's capacity to endure in the future. Madam Speaker If the story of the past year has been 1 of grounding, listening and responding, then the work of the year ahead must be one of building.

Building not only relief, but resilience. Building not only policy but stronger systems. Building not only around the pressures of today, but around the possibilities of tomorrow. Because relief matters, but relief alone is not enough. We must now use this new session of the House to advance the legislative, institutional and structural work required to strengthen the island more broadly and more deeply. That work, Madam Speaker, is reflected in the legislative agenda before us.

It is broad, it is serious, and it points to a government increasingly moving from grounding to structured delivery. And Madam Speaker. This list is not necessarily exhausted. There are other pieces of legislation that we intend to move forward this year that we expect to come to the House. Legislation such as the Bulk Petroleum Levy Legislation and Sovereign Wealth Fund Legislation, Madam Speaker, are also priority agenda items.

Madam Speaker, a first and central pillar of the work ahead is the continued strengthening of all financial system. The people of Anguilla must be able to trust the institutions through which they save, borrow, transact and participate in the economy. That trust cannot rest only on tradition or assumption. It must be underpinned by strong laws, clear oversight, sound regulation and frameworks that protect ordinary people when things go wrong. It is for this reason that this government will move forward with the Payment Systems and Services Bill.

Which will modernize the legal framework for payments across our economy. This legislation is intended to support safer, more efficient, more innovative and more inclusive payment services, including in a world where financial transactions are increasingly digital. We will also advance the Banking Amendment Bill, strengthening the regulatory and supervisory framework governing financial institutions, ensuring that the banking environment remains modern, clear and responsive to emerging risks and evolving best practices. We will move forward with the Deposit Insurance Cooperation Agreement

Bill, a major regional initiative that will provide defined protection for small depositors and strengthen confidence in the financial system by establishing a Deposit Insurance framework across the currency union.

That matters because a person's savings are not merely figures in an account. They represent labour. Sacrifice, hope and security. The system must respect that. Madam Speaker, taken together, these measures are about far more than institutional tidiness. They are about protecting savings, preserving confidence, and about making sure that when people place their money, their trust and their future in the financial system, that trust is justified. And in a modern economy, there must also be fairness. That is why the broader direction of reform includes stronger attention to financial consumer protection, transparency, conduct and inclusion, so that people are not merely participants in the system but are treated fairly by it.

Madam Speaker, the second pillar of the work ahead is the creation of a stronger, more enabling environment for enterprise, investment and economic opportunity. Our people must be able to do more than survive. They must be able to build, create, invest and prosper. That requires more than encouragement. It requires frameworks that are clear, efficient, fair and aligned with the realities of a modern economy.

We will continue reforms connected to the Special Economic Zones Act and the Select Anguilla Agency, ensuring that strategic investment is supported in a structured manner and that our development trajectory is aligned with national priorities. We will continue to work to modernize business licensing because the entrepreneurs seeking to start a venture, the young professional launching a service, and the small enterprise seeking to grow should find government to be a facilitator and not a barrier. Through business portals legislation, we will move increasingly toward digital access to government services, bringing greater convenience, faster processing, and greater transparency to those who must interact with the state. Madam Speaker, this is about dignity in economic participation, is about fairness in access, and it is about recognizing that when government removes unnecessary friction, it creates room for people to move, build and grow.

Madam Speaker, no serious program of national development can ignore the question of land planning and stewardship. Land is not just an economic asset, it is a national inheritance. It is tied to identity, belonging, opportunity and the future shape of the island itself. Where the rules are unclear, outdated or overly complex, unfairness can thrive and development can become disjointed. This government therefore intends to advance a set of reforms that bring greater clarity, transparency and public confidence to the management of land and development.

This includes amendments to the Land Development and Control Act, improvement to the Registered Land Act and Rules, and the progression of a modern Crown Land Act. These measures are intended to improve the legislative framework governing how land is administered, how development is guided and how the public interest is protected. They are about reducing avoidable ambiguity and building a system that is more coherent, more transparent and more equitable. We will also continue strengthening the framework for water through the Department of Water Services Act, recognizing that water reliability and sustainability are not peripheral concerns, but central to development, public health and resilience.

Furthermore, as part of the broader infrastructure and environmental agenda, the framework for water and the groundwater management will continue to be modernized. So that one of our most essential resources is managed sustainably for the benefit of present and future generations. And we will continue work on marine and environmental frameworks, including the Fisheries and Marine Resources Bill, ensuring that our natural resources are protected for future generations. This is not simply a matter of regulation, it is a matter of stewardship. Our marine space is one of Anguilla's greatest assets. It supports livelihoods, contributes to our economy, sustains communities and forms part of the national inheritance we hold and trust for those who will come after us.

Through this legislation, we intend to provide a more modern framework for sustainable fisheries management, Clearer marine zoning arrangements and stronger stewardship of our coastal and marine resources. Madam Speaker, development must never be spoken of only in the language of roads, systems and markets. Development must also be measured by the health of a people, the strength of communities, and the extent to which government protects the human well-being of its people. That is why this legislative program also contains important work in health and community life. We will advance the amendments to the Department of Health Services Act, helping to strengthen the framework for the organization and the delivery of healthcare services. We will continue work on the Health Professions Bill, which is intended to establish a clearer system for registration, licensing, oversight and accountability across the health professions, thereby strengthening standards and safeguarding patient care.

We will progress the Tobacco Act, introducing stronger public health controls. And aligning our approach with broader efforts to reduce preventable disease and protect the health of our people, including through measures addressing tobacco sales, display and exposure to secondhand smoke. We will also advance the National Sports Act. Sport has always meant more in a small society than recreation alone.

It is discipline, it is opportunity, it is belonging. It is a place where young people find confidence, purpose and community. This legislation will provide a modern framework for the governance, coordination and development of organized sport in Anguilla. It will establish the Anguilla Sports Council, strengthen safeguarding provisions and support a more structured and strategic approach to sporting development.

And yes, it will also recognize boat racing as our national sport because development does not require us to leave identity behind. On the contrary, a more mature jurisdiction understands how to build modern systems. While also honouring the traditions, passions and the cultural inheritance. That make us who we are.

Madam Speaker, these are not side issues. Healthy people are stronger people, a more active youth population is a more hopeful future, and the society that invests in well-being is one that understands development in the fullest sense of the world.

GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE AGENDA AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Madam Speaker, these are not side issues. Healthy people are stronger people, a more active youth population is a more hopeful future, and the society that invests in well-being is one that understands development in the fullest sense of the word. An island cannot compete, cannot develop and cannot serve its people well if the systems beneath daily life are outdated, fragmented or unprepared for the future. That is why the legislative agenda also extends into the infrastructure and utility space. That truth has been brought into even sharper focus by the current geopolitical situation.

In recent weeks, developments in the Middle East have once again reminded us how exposed small island economies remain to external shocks in fuel, energy, shipping and transportation. We have seen how quickly instability abroad can translate into rising prices at home. Increased pressure on electricity and utilities and heavier burdens on households and businesses across Anguilla. It is precisely in response to those pressures that this government has acted.

Taken together, Madam Speaker, the three recent measures represent support of around $10 million EC in the near term. And that is not an insignificant intervention. It is a direct fiscal response by government to shield our people and our businesses from pressures they did not create and cannot control on their own. But let's also be clear. These measures, while necessary, cannot be the long-term solution.

There are stabilization measures, they provide immediate relief, but they do not in themselves remove the structural vulnerabilities that leave us exposed in the first place. And that is why the legislative agenda also extends into the infrastructure and utility space. Because resilience cannot be improvised in a crisis, it must be built. We will advance amendments to the Electricity Act and related regulations, strengthening the legislative and the regulatory framework for the energy sector, including in ways that support renewable energy integration and clearer pricing and supply arrangements.

We will continue work on the framework for fuel regulation, Public Utilities and electricity supply because energy security, affordability and transition are no longer optional considerations. They are central to the island's future as long as we remain heavily dependent on imported fossil fuels. We remain vulnerable, vulnerable to price volatility. Vulnerable to geopolitical shocks and vulnerable to conditions beyond our control.

Therefore, the work before us is not simply about managing the present spike, it is about laying the legislative and regulatory foundation for a more stable, more sustainable and more secure future. That is the balance this government seeks to maintain, relief where relief is needed, but reform where reform is required. Action in a moment, but legislation for the long term. We will also move toward modernization in telecommunications, cybersecurity, data protection, and associated Public Utilities regulation, ensuring that Anguilla is better equipped for a digital age in which connectivity, security and data integrity are essential to both economic activity and public trust. We will also continue reforms touching transport, road safety, aviation and related services so that the systems on which people depend every day are safer, clearer and more responsive.

This includes work connected to the Vehicle and Road Traffic framework and related regulations aimed at strengthening road safety and enforcement. Madam Speaker. The safety of our people. The integrity of our borders and the effectiveness of our justice system are foundational responsibilities of the state. In an increasingly complex world, that work must be supported by laws that are modern, operationally fit and responsive to contemporary realities. To that end, this government will advance the Immigration Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record Bill, strengthening the island's border management capabilities and improving the quality of information available to support immigration and security operations.

We will advance the Customs Amendment Bill, including modernization connected to cargo information and border processes. We will continue work on the Criminal Code Amendment Act, the Criminal Procedure Rules, and related justice measures, ensuring that our criminal law and procedure continue to evolve in a manner that supports fairness, clarity and effective administration. Madam Speaker, we will also continue legislative work to strengthen Anguilla's compliance and credibility in the international arena.

This includes important amendments in the areas of anti-money laundering and countering the finance of terrorism. Proliferation financing, supervised reinforcement and the regulation of nonprofit organizations as part of our continuing response to the recommendations arising from Anguilla's Caribbean Financial Action Task Force Mutual Evaluation. We will also continue to advance measures relating to international tax compliance and regulatory transparency, because a modern jurisdiction must not only be open for business, it must be trusted, it must be secure and it must be well regulated, and it must continue to meet the standards expected within an increasingly demanding global environment. Madam Speaker, there is one final truth that must be acknowledged.

No matter how well-crafted policy may be. It means little if the machinery of government is not capable of delivering it. Good intentions do not deliver results. Announcements do not deliver outcomes. Legislation on its own does not change lives. It is the strength of institutions, the discipline of systems, and the quality of execution that determine whether policy becomes progress. And so,

Madam Speaker, this legislative and reform program also turns inward. It turns to the question of how government itself

works, how it plans, how it procures, how it allocates, and how it monitors and how it executes. Because if we are to move this island forward with confidence, then government itself must be able to function with greater efficiency, greater coordination, and greater discipline. The effectiveness of public policy will always depend on the effectiveness of the systems that carry it. It is for that reason that we will advance the Procurement and Contract Administration Amendment Bill with a clear focus on supporting the continued evolution of the procurement system.

Madam Speaker, procurement in Anguilla must be understood as an evolving system. One that was established to strengthen fairness, transparency and accountability in the use of public funds, and one that continues to mature as institutions, officers and processes adjust to its requirements. The task before us is therefore not to retreat from the framework, but to refine and strengthen its operation.

In practice, there have been bottlenecks, delays and uneven application. In some instances that has reflected uncertainty about roles and responsibilities, in others insufficient familiarity with the rules themselves or hesitation in using the flexibility already available within the system. The answer is not to dilute the safeguards that protect public trust. It is to improve understanding, strengthen administration, clarify responsibilities and ensure that the system functions with both integrity and efficiency.

This reform is therefore about balance, preserving the standards that promote fairness and accountability while improving the predictability, timeliness and confidence with which procurement processes are carried out. Madam Speaker, we will also continue work toward reform of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, which lies at the core of how public finances are managed.

This reform is not simply about updating legislation. It is about strengthening accountability across the entire public sector. It is about ensuring that clear and consistent accounting standards are applied not only within central government but across statutory bodies and government agencies. It is about improving the quality, consistency and the transparency of financial reporting and reinforcing the responsibilities of accounting officers and governing boards in the management of public resources, because public funds must be managed to a standard that reflects the trust placed in government by the people and that requires systems are coherent, standards are consistent, and accountability that is real and enforceable across the full machinery of government.

But, Madam Speaker, accountability and financial management must go beyond compliance. It must also strengthen how government plans, prioritizes, and delivers. For that reason, this government will continue work to improve the integration of policy, budgeting and execution. We must ensure that national priorities are clearly translated into funded programs, that expenditure is monitored against outcomes and that performance is tracked in a way that supports timely decision making. Too often the challenge is not in identifying what must be done, but in ensuring that what has been approved is delivered efficiently, on schedule and to the required standard.

Better planning, stronger monitoring and more disciplined execution are therefore essential to effective governance. It is within this broader framework of responsibility and discipline that we must also consider how Anguilla manages periods of strong revenue performance. That is why this government is advancing the framework for the establishment of Anguilla’s Sovereign Wealth Fund. This represents an important step in strengthening the island's fiscal architecture and ensuring that growth is managed with foresight. Responsible government is not only about how we spend, it is also about how we save, how we invest, and how we prepare for the uncertainties that lie ahead.

A Sovereign Wealth Fund provides a structured mechanism through which a portion of national resources can be preserved and invested for long term stability rather than being fully consumed in the present. It allows us to build buffers that can be drawn upon in times of external shock, buffers that support national development over time, and buffers that provide confidence in our fiscal resilience. Madam Speaker.

We have already seen in recent weeks how quickly external developments can require government to step in and absorb costs. Those measures were necessary, and they were justified. But they also serve as a reminder that fiscal space is not abstract. It must be created, protected and sustained. Because the next shock will come, and when it does, we must be ready to respond from a position of strength. The Sovereign Wealth Fund is therefore not simply a financial mechanism.

It reflects discipline, foresight and intergenerational responsibility. It is about ensuring that we are not only managing the present but securing the future. Madam Speaker, when looked at, this agenda tells a story. Not of noise. This is not a government searching for direction. This is a government moving with it. A government that has taken the time to listen and is now moving with greater clarity.

A government that provided relief where relief was needed and is now strengthening the systems that must carry the island forward. A government that understands that compassion without structure is fragile and structure without compassion is cold. This agenda seeks to hold both together. It seeks to protect people now, to strengthen systems for the future and to build an Anguilla that is fairer, more responsive, more resilient and better prepared for the times in which we live.

Madam Speaker, at heart, the work of government is about people. It is about whether the mother at the cash register feels some relief, whether the small business owner has a fairer chance, whether the young person sees opportunity, whether the elderly person feels secure, whether the systems of the island are strong enough, fair enough and humane enough to support the lives of those who depend on them. That is the measure. Over the past year, this government has chosen to lead with care, with discipline, and with a clear commitment to the people of Anguilla. We have listened, we have acted, and we will continue to act with compassion where it's needed, with discipline where it's required, and with purpose in all that we do.

And so as we begin this second session of the 13th Anguilla House of Assembly, we do so not blind to the challenges before us, but resolved to meet them, resolved to steady where there is strain, resolved to reform where there is weakness, resolved to build where there is opportunity, and resolved always to ensure that the people of Anguilla remain at the center of the work of this government.

For it is not enough that an island endures, it must become more capable of giving its people not only stability, but hope.

PREMIER'S CLOSING ADDRESS

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

For it is not enough that an island endures, it must become more capable of giving its people not only stability, but hope. That is the work before us, that is the responsibility we carry and that is the work to which this government recommits itself today. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

OTHER BUSINESS AND ORDERS OF THE DAY

Clerk:

Other business. Government business, none. Private members bills, none. Private bills, none. Other orders of the day.

OTHER ORDERS OF THE DAY - CONTRIBUTIONS

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Are there any orders of the day? I do invite members now to make any contributions in respect to any other orders of the day. I recognize the honourable Leader of Opposition.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Thank you, honourable Member. Are there any other orders of the day? I recognize the honourable Member for West End.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

I recognize the honourable Member for Road South.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Any other orders? I recognize the honourable Member for Valley North.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

I recognize Single Island Wide Electoral District Member Vanterpool.

CONDOLENCES AND FESTIVAL DEL MAR COMMENDATION

Hon.Ellis Lorenzo Webster:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, just wanted to commend the Festival Del Mar committee for Festival Del Mar on Easter weekend, which went very well and looking forward to next year's and the 20th anniversary. Madam Speaker, I think that this festival in Island Harbour shows the best of Anguilla and then we should continue to support it.

Also want to give condolences to the family of the late Sir Carlton Pickering, famed journalist who passed and we certainly will miss his insight, the questions he's asked. And then from Island Harbour, my cousin, famed mechanic, Mr. Romez, Mr. 2 Webster, who passed recently. Madam Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity.

CONDOLENCES AND TRIBUTE TO CARLTON PICKERING

Hon.Cardigan Connor:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I to rise to offer condolences to the family, friends of Carlton Pickering. I've actually had the pleasure of working with him for the past 27 years with KC and Darius Sports. In fact, Madam Speaker, he gave me an opportunity to gain more confidence of being an analyst as I travel the Caribbean, commentating for the West Indies cricket board.

And Madam Speaker, I think it's not just about Mr. Pickering, but all those who have lost someone over recent times. But I will say also when Madam Speaker is that where Pickering was very close to me is that he was very supportive of the cricket program that I was in charge of here in Anguilla.

He also promoted a lot of West Indies cricket. He would play a lot of old film that many Anguillians who would have grown up before television was available. He made that film available to them. And Madam Speaker, at the end, on the 25th of this month, there is a cancer fundraiser in the name of the Malcolm Marshall Cancer Fund, who Malcolm, who's a friend of mine, who a colleague of mine who died from colon cancer and over the past four years, that charity has been able to assist family members who struggle with cancer.

Not a great deal, but it's still something. I think it's a thought that counts and I'm pleased to say that the cancer association will contribute to that fund. That will go towards Mr. Pickering as well as youth cricket in Anguilla, so on the Speaker I stand to say that I know the Premier today would have paid tribute on behalf of government, but for me personally

I want to thank Mr. Pickering for what he's done for me, for cricket and for Anguilla on a whole. Madam Speaker, I thank you.

CONDOLENCES AND BIRTHDAY WISHES

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Thank you very much. I too stand to wish condolences to both Mr. Pickering and Mr. Webster on their passing, and it is from my understanding that both of them passed from the scourge of cancer and over the past two decades, Anguilla has had a significant proliferation of cancer related deaths touching all ages, all walks of life and all spheres. And this is something that hopefully we can dig down and find out exactly what is causing such a significant amount of cancer related deaths since there's a small jurisdiction is ours. But Madam Speaker, I also rise to wish my mother a happy 85th birthday.

She was born on this day in 1941. And she is extremely instrumental in shaping me as a person. I would say it is 87% of who I am is reflected from her. And I just want to again. We already had a nice conversation this morning, Doctor Webster, And I just want to wish her from this standpoint, a wonderful, wonderful birthday. And I'll see you in a little bit. Thank you.

CONDOLENCES TO FAMILIES OF PICKERING, WEBSTER, AND BRYAN

Hon S Rog-Webster:

Good morning, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I too wish to rise to extend my sincerest condolences to the family of Carlton Pickering as well as Mr. Romez Webster. I also wish to extend heartfelt condolences to the Bryans family on the passing of Travis Bryan, who passed away this morning. Travis was a childhood friend, Madam Speaker, a member of my community, a supporter and an individual who I grew up with.

And I just want to extend once again, my sincerest condolences to his parents, Bobby and Thomas on his passing, as well as the wider Bryan's family and community. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

CONDOLENCES TO BEREAVED FAMILIES

Hon.Jose Vanterpool:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just rise in joining with my colleagues on both aisles, both sides of the aisle and offering condolences to all families, friends and persons who are mourning loss at this time. Death is something that's never easy to process, but our thoughts and prayers and support will continue to be with you as you go through this tough time. May God continue to give you peace. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Thank you, honourable Member. Any other contributions? Motion for adjournment.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Madam Speaker, I beg leave that this honorable House be adjourned to April 28th, 2026, the next ordinary sitting of the House. Thank you.

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Seconder?

Hon.Cardigan Connor:

Madam Speaker I rise to second.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Speaker Tara Cater:

Thank you. It has been moved and seconded that this honourable House stands adjourned until Tuesday the 28th of April at 10 AM. Those in favour say aye, those opposed say no. The ayes have it. This House stands adjourned.